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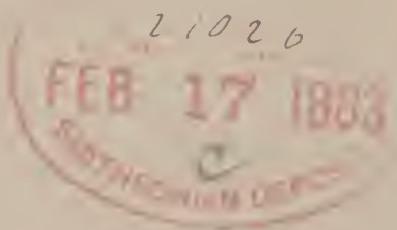
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[From the Proceedings of the Boston Society of Natural History,
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SOME NEW EVIDENCES OF CANNIBALISM AMONG
THE INDIANS OF NEW ENGLAND FROM THE
ISLAND OF MT. DESERT, ME.

BY HENRY W. HAYNES.



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SOME NEW EVIDENCES OF CANNIBALISM AMONG THE INDIANS OF NEW ENGLAND FROM THE ISLAND OF MT. DESERT, ME.

BY HENRY W. HAYNES.

During the past three summers I have spent considerable time in the study of various Indian shell-heaps to be found in different parts of the island of Mt. Desert; more especially of the one at

Hull's Cove, of that upon Bar Island, and of the one upon the shore of the creek immediately opposite.

These large collections of shells on the shores of Frenchman's Bay were first mentioned by Williamson, who speaks of their great extent, and adduces in proof of their antiquity the circumstance that the first settlers found a heavy growth of trees upon them, whose stumps are still to be seen.¹

Dr. Jeffries Wyman has published an account of his investigations in some of them, but in localities different from those which I have studied.² He states that implements made of stone were very rare in those examined by him, and that pottery was but poorly represented. My experience has been quite different.

I have found half a dozen stone axes, one of which was fully nine inches long, and quite a number of other implements of considerable size. These axes were all of the "celt" pattern, including one of the so-called "shoe-shaped" type, and not "tomahawks," furnished with a groove around the middle. There were also as many as a hundred smaller objects, all remarkably well chipped, and mostly made out of a compact green felsite, speckled with quartz. There were at least two dozen large spear-heads, and as many knives; as many arrow-heads, and an equal number of skin-scrapers. Of the latter class one quite small specimen, made of a red felsite resembling the "Sangus jasper," is interesting as being precisely similar in size and shape, and probably in material, to one which I had found some years previously in the cave at Menthon, in the south of France, from which came the skeleton of the famous "Fossil Man," now preserved at the Jardin des Plantes" in Paris.

Fragments of pottery were not at all rare in any of the heaps I examined, and among them was a portion of a bowl of a pipe.

Dr. Wyman found that implements made of bone were more common, and several of these he has figured in a couple of plates. Of most of these bone implements I also met with similar specimens, including two examples of the peculiar little object made out of the lower incisor tooth of a beaver, cut down to a thin edge.

¹ History of Maine, Vol. 1, p. 80.

² American Naturalist, Vol. 1, p. 561.

The heaps themselves were mainly composed of the shells of the common clam, the whelk and the mussel, and in them occurred the bones of the following species of animals, which have been already determined: the Moose, Deer, Bear, Dog, Beaver, Otter, Seal, Dog-fish, Goose, and the Great Auk, now extinct. This list agrees substantially with that given by Dr. Wyman.

But what I wish especially to bring to the attention of this Society at the present time is the fragment of a human bone, which I dug out of the shell-heap at Hull's Cove in the summer of 1880. It is a portion, about three inches in length, of the left femur, between the lesser trochanter and the foramen, according to the determination of Mr. F. W. Putnam. It was found under precisely the same circumstances as the bones of animals obtained at the same time from the heap, all of which were broken into pieces such as would come from portions of flesh of a size suitable for cooking in the pots, whose fragments abounded there. Like these it appears to have been broken for a similar object, and thus it would seem to furnish substantial evidence of the prevalence of cannibalism among the people, whose kitchen refuse makes up these shell-heaps.

Although Mr. Francis Parkman, in his various historical writings, has given many narratives derived from early Jesuit sources, which show that this practice existed among the Iroquois, the Algonquins, and other north-eastern tribes, yet the practical proof of it hitherto brought to light in New England amounts to but very little. All the shell-heaps of this region that have thus far been investigated, so far as my information extends, have afforded only six instances in which fragments of the human skeleton have been found.

At Cotuit-port, in Barnstable, Mass., Dr. Wyman came upon a metatarsal bone of the great toe of the human foot.

Mr. J. Eliot Cabot dug out of a shell-heap at Ipswich, Mass., a portion of a lower human jaw and also the upper part of a humerus, which had been fashioned into an implement. This is now preserved in the Peabody Museum at Cambridge.¹

A human skull was found by Mr. Caleb Cooke, under the

¹ Second Annual Report of the Peabody Museum, p. 16.

Pine-grove shell-heap, near Salem, Mass. This Mr. Putnam believes to be the oldest one ever discovered in New England.¹

But most considerable of all is the discovery made in 1877 by Mr. Manley Hardy, at Great Deer Isle, in Penobscot Bay, of "a human femur, and near by some twenty or thirty more bones of legs and arms, a sternum and portions of a pelvis, but no vertebrae, or ribs. . . . Many of them were broken, and they had no more apparent connection with each other than any heap of bones among kitchen refuse would have; and were mixed with bones of moose and beaver and with ashes and remains of fires." Subsequently two crania, with the lower jaws detached, were found underneath the whole mass. This Mr. Putnam regards as "the only evidence yet obtained of cannibalism among the shell-heap people of New England."²

But in this instance, as well as in that of the skeleton stated in the newspapers to have been found in a shell-heap in Georgetown, Me., and to have been deposited in the cabinet of Bowdoin College, the objection may be raised that possibly these are only examples of intrusive burial. This is undoubtedly the case of the skeleton found by Dr. Chapman in the enormous shell-heap at Damariscotta and Newcastle, Me.³ Of that I have here two fragments for purposes of comparison, which show from their condition and the entire absence of organic matter in them that they are much older than the fragment of a femur from Hull's Cove.

To this the explanation of burial cannot apply; and it seems difficult to account for its presence among fragments of bones of animals that had evidently served for man's food upon any other theory than that of the prevalence of cannibalism among the race, whose reliefs we find so abundantly in the shell-heaps of Mt. Desert.

¹ Tenth Report of the Peabody Mus., p. 29.

² Eleventh do., p. 196.

³ Proceed. of Sci. Assoc. of Urbana, Ohio, Vol. 1, p. 76.

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